THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PULPIT.

SERMON BY THE RIGHT REV. NATHANIEL BOWEN, D. D.

VOL. II.] JULY, 1832. [NO. VII.

ON THE OFFICE OF DEACONS IN THE CHURCH:

A Sermon

BY THE RIGHT REV. NATHANIEL BOWEN, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AND RECTOR OF ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, CHARLESTON.

Deuteronomy x., 8, 9.—"*The* LORD *separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the* LORD, *to stand before the* LORD *to minister unto him, and to bless in his name. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the* LORD *is his inheritance.*

ONLY a short time had elapsed after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, when Moses received the commands and instructions of JEHOVAH, relative to the tabernacle, its structure, furniture, services and ministers. In evidence of his will to all ages and generations of men, that all things appertaining to his immediate worship and service should be held worthy of their sacred regard and care, GOD himself thus, in the minutest manner, originally prescribed them, and established them to be observed *by an ordinance for ever.* And when all things were prepared according to the instructions which Moses had received in the Mount, and the Tabernacle was reared and furnished, Aaron, according to the same instructions, was solemnly invested with the Priest's office; while the sons of Aaron, Moses also annointed, as he did their father, that they too might *minister with him in the Priest's office; whose annointing was for an everlasting Priesthood, throughout their generations.*

The whole tribe of Levi, distinguished by their purity from the pollution of the idolatry with which the rest of the children of Israel had corrupted themselves at the foot of Sinai, were afterward set apart from the nation, by an express command, to serve in the inferior offices of the sanctuary; *to minister unto Aaron the Priest,* (as the language of the original command concerning

them is) *to keep his charge and the charge of the whole congregation, to do the service of the Tabernacle.*

Thus, under the authority and guidance of a particular revelation, were the officers of the ancient Church of GOD established: and thus established, the constitution of the Jewish Church, although varied at some periods of its history, in circumstances of inferior importance, continued until the *fulness of the time was come*, essentially the same. Then, the appointed period of its duration having expired, it, with the whole economy to which it belonged, was abolished; and all its glory absorbed in the brightness of his glory, who was *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

This constitution of the ecclesiastical part of the Mosaic economy, thus established in the wilderness, and afterward transferred to the temple on Mount Zion, has seemed to many pious and learned men to have been a pattern, after which was formed the constitution of the Church of CHRIST. The language of the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles is, "as were Aaron and his sons and the Levites under the law, the like let the Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons claim to be under the Gospel."* And with the venerable authority of this early age, thus to sanction it, we may safely entertain the persuasion, that the striking analogy of the constitution of the Church of CHRIST to that of the Tabernacle, was not merely an accidental resemblance; but designed by the all-wise author of both these institutions, as an interesting expression to all men, of the unity of the dispensations of which they were severally the depositories. It might be the divine purpose, that through the identity of character and design, in this as in other respects, pervading a system of things extending through so many ages, men might be induced to confess and adore *Him* as its author, whose wisdom alone could be adequate to such an effect, and thus be led to CHRIST, *as the Alpha and Omega of the whole, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*

In the text, the office of the Levites and its duties and condition

---

* St. Ignatius.

are particularly presented to our attention. It will accord with the character of the interesting solemnity before us,* to endeavor to illustrate it, with a reference, chiefly, to the corresponding inferior office of the Christian Ministry, to which our attention is, on this occasion, peculiarly called.

FIRST. *The* LORD *separated the tribe of Levi.* It was not by human authority that they, more than those who held the higher departments of the Jewish Ministry, were invested with the office which they bore. Moses in their case, as in that of Aaron and his sons, did but execute the express command of the most high GOD. *The* LORD *himself separated them to his service.*

In the same manner, Christians, we are to adore the authority of heaven in the appointment of inferior as well as of the higher orders of the ministry, under the dispensation *which came by* JESUS CHRIST. CHRIST committed not the original organization of his Church to the mere arbitrary will or unassisted wisdom of men; nor has he left the general constitution, which by the direction and authority of the HOLY GHOST sent upon the apostles at the first, he gave it, subject to alteration by human vanity or caprice. *He*, by this divine agent, at the first, *gave some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of* CHRIST. *Go ye into all the world*, said he to the twelve, when he had come from the grave, *and preach the Gospel to every creature, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the* FATHER, *and of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST—*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.* Here, then, is the Son of GOD himself clothing the first ministers of his word and sacraments with his authority; and in their persons addressing the promise of his presence, government, and care, to his Church, in all the ages that should follow. In fulfilment of his gracious promise, we accordingly believe him, although absent in the body, to have been present by the Spirit, with his apostles, in all their

* An ordination of Deacons.

counsels and proceedings. And in fulfilment of the same promise, we believe him still to be ever present, to *direct*, *approve*, and *bless* all that, according to the example and authority of his apostles, is done for the right government and edification of his Church. Having this assurance we need not, and we do not, acknowledge mere human authority as the source of the powers with which the ministers of CHRIST, as such, are clothed. He who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, is more especially present with his Church, to superintend all its interests and concerns. It is he by whom the ministers of that Church are invested with the authority they exercise, and by whom all their work is done that is profitable to his glory—and having this assurance, the Church permits not any to be received even into the lowest order of its ministry, without the solemn recognition on their part, of the divine will and influence in the transaction. They must declare that "they trust they are inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon them this office."

There is in this language, nothing that can be supposed to countenance, in any degree, the conceit of extraordinary sensible impulses from the Spirit, creating preachers and ministers of the Gospel by an instantaneous communication to minds before the most uncultivated, and hearts before the most depraved, of the powers and feelings necessary to the character. It simply implies the reasonable requisition, that all who would obtain part in this ministry, should be ready, in the sight of the Searcher of hearts, to declare themselves humbly persuaded, so far as men can be persuaded concerning the motives of their conduct, that the motive which influences them to take upon them this office, is worthy of the sacredness of its design and character, and such, consequently, as cannot but be ascribed to that HOLY SPIRIT from whom alone "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed," viz: the love of GOD and man sincere, ardent, firm; filling them with a solicitude for the happiness of the one, and the glory of the other; and prompting them so to desire to advance the interests of both, as to be willing to spend and be spent in the service of the Church and Gospel of the Son of GOD. When therefore any persons, thus sincerely persuaded, and otherwise duly qualified, present

themselves for admission to this ministry, and are set apart to it by prayer and the laying on of hands, then, as really as he did those whose case is represented in the text, *the* LORD *may be said to separate them to stand before the* LORD *and minister unto him.* For it is the spirit of the LORD by which "the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified," that moves them thus to dedicate themselves to his service. It is the LORD who by the same spirit matures and brings that desire to good effect; and it is the LORD by whose authority *they* act, who invest them with the badges of his service.

SECONDLY. *The* LORD *separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the* LORD, *to stand before the* LORD *to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name.* It were unnecessary, even would the time admit of it, to enter into a minute consideration of the particulars which are here stated as comprised in the part assigned to the Levites in the services of the ancient sanctuary. It is sufficient to observe, that the duties belonging to them under all previous administrations, as well as the modifications and enlargement of them made by David, when the Tabernacle had given place to the temple worship, all denote a sacred office, and that distinct from that of the Priests, and inferior, and subject to it.

The same things are true of the office of Deacons in the Church of CHRIST; theirs is an ecclesiastical office, distinct from, and auxiliary and subject to the authority of others. Every testimony by which a judgment can be formed of the nature, relations and duties of ecclesiastical offices, in the first ages of the Church, imposes upon us this persuasion. Their solemn separation at the first from the whole body of the brethren, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the apostles, denotes the sacredness of the functions to which they were devoted. Philip, in the exercise of the authority thus imparted to him, we find preaching and baptizing; and Paul himself plainly, as we see in the chapter to which the words which have been read to you belong, represents Deacons as an order of ministers, by his instructions addressed to Timothy, respecting their character, conduct, and manners, in the same part of his epistle, which contains similar instructions for those who are invested with distinct and higher offices. In the age immediately

succeeding, we find Deacons expressly inhibited from secular business, as being an order of men holy to the Lord;* and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in the writings of this period any mention of this office which does not plainly designate an office, apostolically instituted, of the Church and ministry of CHRIST.

The variations to which the functions of this order of the Christian ministry have been subject in different periods and places, do not, in any degree, affect the evidence of the fact we are asserting. Through all those variations, every thing essential to this fact remains apparent; that Deacons were ordained by prayer and the laying on of the hands of a distinct order of ministers, to whom this duty specially appertained, that under *their* authority and subject to *their* direction, they exercised the ministerial functions of baptizing, reading, and assisting at the celebration of the worship and sacraments of the Church.†

In conformity, then, with the example of all primitive antiquity, the branch of the Church of CHRIST, of which we are members, declares it to *appertain to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in divine service; and especially, when he ministereth the holy communion; to read the holy scriptures and homilies, in the Church, and to instruct the youth in the catechism; in the absence of the Priest, to baptize infants; and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop.*

THIRDLY. The text having declared the *nature*, proceeds to represent the will of heaven, with respect to the *condition* of the office of the Levites. *Wherefore Levi hath no part or inheritance with his brethren.* Called out from among the people, the tribe thus dedicated by the will of JEHOVAH to his own immediate service, were separated from all their common pursuits, and deprived of all the honors or profits, which either the judicial or regal government could confer. So, too, they whom GOD calls into the service of his Church, in a sense essentially the same, are

---

* Cyprian's Letters.

† All questions relating to the office and duties of Deacons in the Church may be found stated and discussed in Bancroft's Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline.

called to a renunciation of all part and inheritance with their brethren. Of all its stages and degrees alike indeed, as well as of that which is on this occasion peculiarly in our view, this language represents the true condition. The pomp of power, the splendor of worldly distinction, the pride and pleasures of life, are not for the ministers of CHRIST. It is, however, the *first* step in this holy warfare, which constitutes emphatically the renunciation, which the text may be considered to describe. The same hour which witnesses, and the same ceremony which seals the dedication of any to CHRIST, as his ministering servants, witnesses and seals their consent to have henceforth no participation with the rest of men, in the common pursuits and interests of the world, or in any of the objects of merely secular interest and care. Shameful dissemblers were they with GOD were it otherwise. If, of all the professors of the religion of the Son of GOD, it is true (and who shall dispute the truth of what he has himself declared?) that they cannot serve two masters, the world and him, with how much greater force will this declaration apply to them who devote themselves to the work of his sacred ministry! In the duties of that ministry, there is enough, (nay, how much more than enough, let them say who have arrived at life's farthest verge, in the most diligent and assiduous discharge of them,) to employ all their time, all their solicitude, and all their powers. They may acquire much knowledge of the oracles of GOD, and yet know them very imperfectly and unsatisfactorily. They may have dealt out much of the bread of life, and yet to the last see many more around them hungering for it than they can feed. They may rejoice in the assurance of having many souls to present at the last to the LORD, as the seal of their fidelity, yet mourn and weep for numbers whom they could not induce *to come to* CHRIST, *that they might have life,* passing into eternity with no interest secured in the salvation of the Cross. Can they then presume on the privilege of sharing their affections, their labors, or their time, between the things of their master and the world? Oh no! they know that no such privilege belongs to the service, to which, by the most solemn of engagements, they are bound. They know that neither their commission includes, nor the nature of their ser-

vice will admit it. That none ever come to take upon them this office with the solemn declaration on their tongues, that they "trust they are inwardly moved to do so, by the HOLY GHOST," while their hearts are divided between its objects and those of secular pursuits and desires, we would not venture to assert. With the depravity of the heart of man there is scarcely any thing impossible, and instances, even of this hypocrisy, the most odious that the mind can conceive, there may be registered among the subjects of "the wrath that shall burn like fire for ever." But, instances of this must be, and for the honor of our nature, let us presume they will always be but *rare* exceptions to the general holiness of intention with which men enter into the service of the sanctuary. It were oo daring an impiety for the most hardened, and too serious for the most thoughtless profligacy often to commit: and you must seek another explanation of that want of a sufficiently undivided interest in the objects of their calling, which, in all ages, the Church may have had more or less to lament in her ministers, than that which resolves it into motives unworthy at the beginning, of the pure and exalted nature of her service. You must recognise in it, a melancholy evidence of that infirmity of fallen man, which, amid the trials, necessities, and temptations of life, often renders his best and holiest purposes ineffectual, or the sad effect of the relaxation of that holy vigilance which, in all conditions alike, is indispensable to the integrity of human virtue.

If, however, we must confess, on the one hand, an inconsistency sometimes to mark the lives of the ministers of CHRIST, with the holiness of the purpose for which they are separated from the world, yet must it, on the other, be declared of them at large, that as it is their lot to have no part or inheritance with their brethren, in the honors, profits, and pleasures of the world, so they are cheerfully content to have none. Even where considerations of human expediency may have united the ecclesiastical with the civil state, and annexed high distinction and emolument to some of its departments, even there, unless the state of the Church be utterly corrupt, honor and affluence can actuate comparatively none to enter into its ministry. At the stations in which these are found, but few can hope to arrive; and thousands must devote themselves to the

laborious work, the toil ending only with their days, of the service of CHRIST, with no higher expectation than that of being scantily and grudgingly provided with the things needful for their sustenance. No. The cupidity with which the enemies of Christianity have delighted to reproach its ministers, can move none to enter into a calling, out of which, the purposes of such a temper can so much more readily and effectually be answered; and the ignoble ambition into which an ignorant malignity would explain the zealous enterprise or learned assiduity of those who have been early distinguished in the service of their divine master could, here, but defeat and disgrace itself. A worldly minded ambition, an ambition unworthy the Christian, because incompatible with the love of GOD and man, which must regulate all his views, and influence all his conduct, would seek another sphere than this. It would choose the world for its field; where ignorance can so readily be duped, or knavery bribed, into its views. In the Church, it were too base a motive for the favor indispensable to its object; and stripped of its disguise, would be soon abandoned to the scorn and disgrace it merited.

But, my brethren, whatever coloring other circumstances may afford for the alleged worldliness of the views of Christian ministers, it is certain those of their condition in our quarter of the Christian world, are calculated to secure their motives, at least from any such reproach as this. Here, little, indeed, is the part or inheritance they have with their brethren. Here obscurity and poverty are their lot—poverty in many places, absolute and almost extreme; in others, comparative indeed, yet poverty justly so called, while limited to the provision barely adequate to the decent necessities of the present, their most favored condition admits of no reservation for the increased necessities of the future. While, then, such is the condition of the ministers of CHRIST, yet is it a condition at which they feel they are not to repine; nay, by that very authority which has ordered their condition as it is, they are forbidden to murmur or repine at it; for it assures them, as in the last clause of the text, *the* LORD *is their inheritance.*

FOURTHLY. This language, in its original application, is sufficiently explained by the laws of the Levitical code, making provision

for the Priests and Levites; and by the honor to which, as the immediate attendants of the Divine presence, they were admitted. In the same manner is the LORD the inheritance of those, who, in the sense we have been considering, renounce, for his service, all inheritance with their brethren. *Do ye not know*, says St. Paul, *that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the* LORD *ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* This illustrious apostle himself, and those who first trod with him the wine press of the vineyard, might refuse to be partakers of this privilege, and suffer all things, *laboring, working with their own hands*, as his language is, because, with the miraculous powers given them, and the extraordinary presence and existence of the HOLY GHOST, their work could not thus be hindered, or have its usefulness diminished. By their authority, however, the right of the ministers of CHRIST to support from those to whom they minister, is unquestionably established. Behold, then, here their inheritance which cometh of the LORD. On their brethren, with whom, in other things, they have no part or inheritance, sacredly rests their charge. The obligation is as obvious as any other of the Christian profession; and the faithful followers of the Savior can never either question, evade, or be impatient of it. If, however, amidst a general insensibility among those who name the name of CHRIST, to the things which his law demands, his ministers ever are, as in some circumstances they are, denied the care and support their office claims; yet have they, in a nobler sense, an inheritance of the LORD, in the honor* of waiting on him in the courts of his house, and ministering there to those who shall be heirs of his salvation. However the ministers be esteemed in the world, think not we idly magnify our office, when we say it has an appointment that is of heaven; it is an important branch of the

* "GOD chose Levi for this separation before any other tribe, for Moses' sake: whom he would honor by advancing the house of his father to the highest pitch of dignity that mortal man could attain to. For what greater honor than to be the ambassadors of the LORD of Hosts, to be admitted to the inspection of his most sacred mysteries—to be GOD'S κληρος, his proper and peculiar portion! Would to GOD they either knew or believed this, who think their house disgraced and their blood stained, if any of their kin become of the Clergy. It was not so, in GOD'S opinion."—*Mede's Discourses.*

glorious plan of grace concerted in the councils of heaven, for recovering fallen sinners to glory, honor and immortality. Shall it not then be honorable in our eyes? If the Levites were honorable because GOD had separated them from the people, and brought them to him, to do the service of the Tabernacle; if under a dispensation so much inferior in excellency and glory, it were better and more honorable to be a door keeper in the house of the LORD than to dwell in the secure and high places of human strength and pride, how much greater dignity must belong to their office, of how much greater honor must they be thought worthy, in the eyes of angels and the spirits of the just in heaven, and all the righteous and the good upon earth, who faithfully minister in the latter house, and serve the altar of the Son of GOD? Yes! Ambassadors of GOD, and messengers of his grace to guilty men, fellow workers with him in making ready a people prepared for his coming, great is the honor with which, at his hands, they are clothed. *If the ministration of death written and engraven on stones was glorious, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the* SPIRIT *be rather glorious? and if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth doth exceed in glory!*

It is another sense of the language of the text applied to the ministers of CHRIST, that they have an inheritance of the LORD in the moral happiness with which it is of the nature of their work to reward those who exercise it with fidelity. They who thus faithfully wait upon the LORD, are the chosen, however humble, instruments by which heaven dispenses its best and choicest blessings to mankind. Ministers of the reconciliation, which JESUS died upon the cross to effect, of heaven with earth, it is the great purpose of their calling to bring their sinful and unhappy fellow creatures to peace with themselves and GOD, and thus aid them to acquire fortitude for the trials, consolation for the sorrows of the world, and how to meet even with death itself with equanimity and joy. If then, they behold the blessing they have implored resting on their labors, rich amidst all their poverty, is *their inheritance of the* LORD. If then, as instrumental agents of the spirit of grace, they have planted the seeds of holiness and peace in the hearts of men, tended the springing blades, and watered them with

the tears of solicitude and love, they see heaven crowning them with increase, must not their hearts be glad? If, when they have faithfully labored, by example, and word, and persuasion, and all the means proper to their office, they see the fruits of their labors in the increase of the practical efficacy of religion, or if they have seen the spirit of the desponding sinner revived by their instrumentality, the proud offender arrested in his progress to perdition, and humbled at the feet of JESUS; if they see GOD, by their means, adding to the Church such as shall be saved, if they have been employed by him to carry his effectual consolation to the afflicted, and light up the flame of hope and joy in the bosom of the dying; if thus it should have been the pleasure of heaven to bless the work committed to their hands, in the increase of the faith, the virtue and the happiness and peace of their fellow mortals, then have they an inheritance of the LORD, more valuable than all that for it they have renounced, preferable to all that the world could have conferred.

But great and real as may be the happiness rising from this source, to those who minister in the sanctuary of the Redeemer, yet it is often balanced by sorrows inseparable from their calling. At the utmost the success of their labors can be but imperfect; and in the relapse of some, whom they had seen turn to GOD, in the insensibility and indifference with which others may hear the word of GOD at their mouth, in the successful hostility of a proud, a profligate, or insidious infidelity, even in their sphere of appointed labor, seducing and leading captive the minds of many, and substituting its gloom and desolation, for the cheerful and peaceful hope which Christianity inspires; or dangerous error of religious opinion insinuating itself to the spoiling of the minds and conduct of those for whom they had prayed and labored, that they might continue in the faith as the Church has held and taught it, grounded and settled in these, and other circumstances, they find the Cross which they, like their master, must bear before a gainsaying and unfriendly world. Yet, have they abundant compensation for even these severities of their condition, in the assurance that the LORD is their inheritance in heaven: who, if they are *faithful unto death, will give them a crown of life.* We trust and believe, my brethren, that the ministering servants of the LORD in general, are able to make full proof of this consolatory assurance; and amid the

worst and most painful circumstances of their condition, amid all their privations and afflictions, to say with the apostle, *none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the* LORD JESUS, *to testify the Gospel of the grace of* GOD. At least, we trust and hope, they labor so *to approve themselves to* GOD *faithful stewards of his mysteries, rightly dividing the word of truth*, as to have hope toward GOD, that he will accept them at the last; and for their poverty give them the treasures of his kingdom; for their sorrow, the joy that they have who stand before his throne in heaven, and for their obscurity on earth the glory *that is at his right hand for evermore.*

In dwelling on this part of the subject, I have hoped to suggest some grateful and animating reflections to the minds of those, who are now to be separated by the LORD to stand before the LORD, and minister unto him, are about to renounce all inheritance with their brethren. My young friends, the most solemn and important hour of your lives is at hand. In a manner the most awful that human wisdom could devise, you are about to devote yourselves to a work the most important that human life can know. By a vow, which CHRIST himself stands ready to witness and record, you are going to dedicate yourselves to him, in the near and important relation of his ministers, until death shall discharge you and send you to render up your account in heaven. These views of the business before you, we have no doubt, without this suggestion of them, are present in all their solemnity to your minds. The season of your preparation for this sacred service, has been passed in a manner sufficiently honorable to you to forbid any apprehension that you do not well understand and feel the solemn and momentous purport of the obligations which you are going to assume. Yet, in the spirit of affectionate solicitude, as well for you as for the cause with which your lives and characters are in future to be connected, I cannot forbear to to avail myself of an occasion, the circumstances of which are so well calculated to enforce and give efficacy to advice, to address to you a few words of exhortation.

It were a pernicious error, then, let me say to you, my friends, to suppose that the years of this inferior ministry may be well

enough passed, if care be taken, merely to provide, before they expire, for a compliance with the letter and form of the increased requisitions, with which the Church will meet your demand to be admitted to the higher departments of her service. Yet this is an error to which you will, in various ways, be tempted. Early popularity, and the warm approbation and applause of partial friends may lead you to attach more than their just importance to acquisitions already made. The fascinations of general literature may lessen your relish for the laborious and unfashionable reading, much of which is indispensable to your future respectability and success; and the pleasures of society, (of which it is amiable to be fond,) may have, in the condition of life in which your lot is cast, a power to which more time must be sacrificed than it is possible for you to spare, without injury to yourselves and injustice to your master's work. Resist then, we beseech you, these and all other temptations that may peculiarly beset this interesting season of your life, and consecrate it to the studies and exercises which are necessary to your future usefulness and honor. Let the period of your service in this outer court of the sanctuary, in which you will be free from the cares and toils for others, which, when the pastoral relation has once been instituted, will throw high obstacles in the way of a due attention to yourselves, either in heart, or mind, or life, be regarded as your golden opportunity of improvement, as well in all the virtues as the knowledge, proper to the character you will have assumed. Resolve, we beseech you, and supplicate without ceasing, the aid of the spirit of grace to make the resolution effectual, that the expiration of that probationary stage of your ministerial life, shall not find you unprovided with any principle of conduct necessary to the true spirit and intent of your calling, or any acquisition in the knowledge it requires, which in that period, might have been attained. We do not, however, recommend this early diligence to grow in professional knowledge and virtue, as the means of lessening the burden of a more advanced stage of the ministerial course, and preparing the way for an easy life hereafter; but that the increased burden of its more advanced periods, may find you strong enough to bear it. All its stages alike, it becomes us ingenuously to assure you, are full of care and labor. Once enlisted in this warfare, you cannot put off

its armor but with your strength to bear it, or with the tabernacle of the body itself. Forbidden to encourage you by expectations which your experience would disappoint, we must represent the life before you, as all a life of toil, anxiety and conflict. We cannot withhold this representation of it, through any fear of discouraging or depressing you; for could the prospect of its difficulties discourage you, you were unworthy the honor of the service of the LORD.

Superior, then, to any discouragement from the prospect of its inconveniences, and guarded against the temptations peculiar to your condition, be diligent during your present, and prepare for a faithful, an able, and effectual future ministry. Learn above all things, to love and delight in your calling, even in the humblest offices of this its humblest degree, as that which has the Savior of the world for its author, and for its objects the present instruction, consolation, and peace, and the salvation and immortal happiness of your fellow men. Forgetful of yourselves, your honor, your interest, and all present reward of human favor, dwell in habitual, fond meditation on your master who is in heaven, and the souls which he would make you instrumental of bringing to his joy. Study the doctrine of CHRIST. Endeavor to learn it practically yourselves, and the task of teaching it to others will be at once, more easy, more pleasant, and more honorable. Strive so to incorporate it with your own experience and the whole system of your affections and feelings and life, that out of *the abundance of the heart* your mouth may always speak, what it may appertain to your office to utter.

Are these hard sayings? They contain only that without which you cannot be useful or happy in this office; without which you cannot have the present favor and approbation of the master into whose service you will profess to have entered, or his acceptance or reward, when you shall stand before his presence at the last.

By laying these, and all other things which appertain to a faithful, an useful and honorable ministry in the Church of CHRIST, effectually to heart, it is *our earnest desire and prayer to* GOD *for you*, that *having used the office of a Deacon well and purchased yourselves a good degree*, you may have an inheritance of the LORD, rich and abundant; that having finished the work CHRIST had given you to do on earth, you may receive its reward

in heaven; and *that having fought the good fight, and finished your course and kept the faith, you may find a crown of righteousness, which the* LORD, *the righteous judge, shall give you in his day.*

My Christian brethren of this assembly, as members of the Church of GOD, and friends to human happiness, and the cause of religious truth and virtue, the occasion claims a peculiar interest in your feelings. In circumstances which admit of few encouragements to it, beside those arising from its own interesting nature, you see before you, candidates for the ministry of CHRIST. While every other walk of life presents inducements so much more powerful than this affords, what can be more grateful to the Christian, than to behold any, however small their number, thus choosing, rather to suffer affliction and poverty with the ministers of GOD, than to seek, even with the most reasonable presumption of success, the honors, the riches, or distinctions of the world. Surely none can truly call themselves by the name of CHRIST, and refuse to rejoice with us in such an expression as this of zeal and love for the Savior and his truth. None can value the interests and honor of the Church, and behold without high emotion, those well qualified to send them, thus standing on its threshhold and looking back upon the world, its honors, interests, pleasures, and calmly, firmly, cheerfully bidding them farewell. No! we feel, my brethren, that you cannot but take part in our joy in receiving thus to the service of our LORD, those who so well promise to do it honor. While, then, you fervently join your prayers with ours, for the blessing of heaven on their pious and noble purpose; cease not, we pray you, to supplicate the LORD of the vineyard to send forth more laborers into his harvest—equal to its greatness and abundance. By the kindness and the honor which CHRIST demands for them, at the hands of all who call themselves his disciples, encourage their spirits and strengthen their hands: and thus while you promote his glory and the happiness and salvation of your fellow men, contribute to make him your friend and advocate in heaven, who hath said, *he that giveth a cup of cold water only to one of the least of these, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward.*